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Selected Speeches and News Releases

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FARMER COOPERATIVE BUSINESS VOLUME UP SLIGHTLY IN 1987

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29—Business volume of farmer cooperatives in the United States reached $59.3 billion in 1987, slightly above the $58.4 billion in 1986 but far from the $73 billion record high in 1984, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

Randall E. Torgerson, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Cooperative Service, attributed the small increase primarily to the reduced number of acres in production in 1987, which resulted in lower demand for farm supplies. Overall, prices received by farmers for all farm products were up slightly in 1987. The numbers of cooperatives and cooperative memberships, however, continued a long downward trend.

Total cooperative business volume includes marketing (the value of products sold), farm supplies (sales of fertilizer, chemicals, fuels, feed and other supplies to members and patrons), and receipts from services such as trucking, storage, ginning, and drying.

Torgerson said the drop in the number of cooperatives—from 5,369 in 1986 to 5,174 in 1987—was attributable to reorganizations, including cooperative mergers, consolidations and acquisitions, and to some cooperatives going out of business.

Cooperative memberships totaled 4.39 million in 1987, about the same as in the previous year. The number of memberships is larger than the number of farms because many farmers belong to more than one cooperative. Memberships per association averaged 848 in 1987 compared to 820 in 1986.

Marketing volume in 1987 was $43.2 billion, up 4.1 percent. Dairy was the leading farm product for the third year with sales of $16.1 billion, which represents 37 percent of cooperative marketings. Grain and soybean marketings decreased 7.6 percent to $10.7 billion. The drop in sales can be attributed primarily to lower feed grain production and prices.

Poultry, other products, and sugar showed the largest percentage increases. The largest decreases were in nuts and grain.

1987 farm supply volume of $14.2 billion was down 5.9 percent from

the previous year. Decreased demand reflected by the government acreage setaside programs and the resulting lower prices for fertilizer and petroleum were major causes. Among the major farm supply items, seed showed the only increase. Services such as trucking, cotton ginning, and storage rose 8.5 percent to $1.9 billion.

Table 1—Cooperative Business Volume, 1986 and 1987[1]

	1986	1987
	(millions of dollars)	
Products marketed:		
Cotton	1,444	1,571
Dairy	14,821	16,109
Fruits and vegetables	5,106	5,552
Grain and soybeans	11,605	10,720
Livestock and wool	2,996	3,180
Nuts	1,133	941
Poultry	917	1,146
Rice	828	848
Sugar	1,482	1,714
Other[2]	1,208	1,456
Total	41,540	43,237
Supplies purchased:		
Farm chemicals	1,358	1,331
Feed	2,883	2,746
Fertilizer	2,915	2,756
Petroleum	4,998	4,197
Seed	514	593
Building materials, containers, and farm machinery and equipment	853	900
Other supplies	1,574	1,676
Total farm supplies	15,095	14,199

Selected services:		
Trucking, cottonginning, storage, grinding, locker plants, and other	1,760	1,909
TOTAL	58,395	59,345

[1]Volume excludes intercooperative business. Data is preliminary.
[2]Includes dry edible beans and peas, tobacco, and other miscellaneous products.

Table 2—Farmer Cooperative Numbers and Memberships, 1987[1]

	Number of Cooperatives	Number of Memberships
Products marketed:		
Cotton	374	102,976
Dairy	323	137,066
Fruits and vegetables	322	64,005
Grain and soybeans	1,451	901,454
Livestock, wool, and poultry	446	421,683
Rice	50	21,928
Sugar products	38	10,002
Other[2]	97	357,439
Total for farm products	3,101	2,016,553
Total for farm supplies	1,953	2,250,142
Total for services	120	122,022
TOTAL	5,174	4,388,717

[1]Many cooperatives are multiproduct and multifunctional in operations and are classified according to predominant commodity or function indicated by business volume. Data is preliminary.

[2]Other includes beans and peas (dry edible), nuts, tobacco, and miscellaneous.

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#

USDA TO ESTABLISH LIAISON OFFICES AT 17 HISTORICALLY BLACK UNIVERSITIES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will establish offices at the 16 "1890" land-grant universities and Tuskegee University as part of efforts to strengthen relationships with these schools and encourage more minorities to pursue careers in agriculture and forestry.

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Peter C. Myers said the offices will be a focal point for all USDA activities at these universities, known collectively as the 1890 institutions after the land-grant college legislation of that year. Although a few USDA agencies currently have a liaison on some 1890 campuses, this is the first time there will be a liaison at each university to represent all of USDA, he said.

The USDA liaisons will help with curriculum development, recruit and counsel students on employment opportunties in USDA, and develop new ideas and approaches to reach small scale, limited resource and minority farmers.

"From international trade to the revitalization of rural America, there are numerous career opportunities in agriculture and forestry," Myers said. "USDA is strengthening its ties to the 1890 institutions to ensure that minority youth know of those opportunities and are encouraged to seek out careers in agriculture."

Myers said USDA is recruiting among current employees for the liaisons and expects to have all 17 positions filled by April.

Establishment of USDA offices at these institutions was one of several recommendations for improving communications and developing active partnerships between USDA and the 1890 institutions made at a symposium held in Nashville, Tenn., last April. A joint USDA-1890 task force chaired by USDA's Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson is overseeing implementation of the recommendations. Additional USDA initiatives with the 1890 institutions will be announced later, Myers said.

The 17 institutions are: Alabama A & M University, Huntsville; Alcorn

State University, Lorman, Miss.; University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff; Delaware State College, Dover; Florida A & M University, Tallahassee; Fort Valley State College, Fort Valley, Ga.; Kentucky State University, Frankfort; Langston University, Langston, Okla.; Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Mo.; University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, Princess Anne; North Carolina A & T State University, Greensboro; Prairie View A & M University, Prairie View, Texas; South Carolina State College, Orangeburg; Southern University, Baton Rouge, La.; Tennessee State University, Nashville; Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Ala.; and Virginia State University, Petersburg.

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#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Dec. 30, through 12:00 midnight Thursday, Jan. 5.

Since the AWP is less than the 1987-crop and 1988-crop base quality loan rates of 52.25 and 51.80 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate for 1987-crop and 1988-crop upland cotton during this period is equal to the AWP adjusted for the specific quality and location.

Because the loan repayment rate for 1988-crop upland cotton in effect during this period is less than the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo loan eligibility on their 1988-crop upland cotton. The payment rate for cotton sold during this period will equal the difference between the loan rate and the loan repayment rate.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Based on data for the week ending Dec. 29, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price			
Northern Europe Price		62.35	
Adjustments:			
Average U.S. spot market location	10.60		
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.00		
Average U.S. location	0.42		
Sum of Adjustments		-13.02	
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE		49.33	cents/lb.
Coarse Count Adjustment			
Northern Europe Price		62.35	
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price		-56.92	
		5.43	
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton		-4.15	
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT		1.28	cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on Jan. 5.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

#

USDA TO GUARANTEE LOANS FOR DROUGHT-HIT RURAL BUSINESSES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 30—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration is launching a $200 million drought and disaster loan guarantee program for rural businesses suffering effects from 1988 weather disasters, Acting FmHA Administrator La Verne Ausman announced today.

"Under this new program, we can guarantee up to 90 percent of a loan to help alleviate financial distress caused, directly or indirectly, by drought, hail, excessive moisture, or related conditions occurring in 1988," Ausman said. "The maximum loan amount is $500,000."

The program was authorized by the Disaster Assistance Act of 1988. Interim regulations implementing the program are scheduled for Federal Register publication Tuesday, Jan. 3, 1989, with a 60-day public comment period.

"We are starting this program at the same time we are accepting public comments because of the need of many rural businesses for financial assistance," Ausman said. "We can make any changes that may be necessary after the 60-day comment period is over."

The program will parallel in most respects the existing FmHA business and industry guaranteed loan program. Loans will be made by regular commercial lenders, at negotiated interest rates, with FmHA guarantees providing protection against loss should a loan fail. The main difference between the programs, in addition to the $500,000 cap, is that the drought and disaster program will guarantee only principal, while the business and industry program guarantees both principal and interest.

Marlyn Aycock (202) 447-4323

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FIRST ESTIMATE OF MEAT IMPORTS FOR 1989 BELOW TRIGGER LEVEL

WASHINGTON, Dec. 30—Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng today announced that the 1989 trigger level for meat imports specified under the Meat Import Act has been set at 1,437.8 million pounds, 87.7 million pounds below the 1988 level.

Because 1989 imports are expected to be below the trigger level, there is no need to require quotas or restraints on imports of foreign meats at this time, Lyng said. USDA estimates that 1989 imports of beef and other meats covered by the law will be 1,425 million pounds, or about 13 million pounds below the trigger.

The Meat Import Act of 1979 requires the secretary to estimate imports of certain meat items—primarily beef and veal—each quarter of the year, and the President to restrict these imports if a USDA import estimate equals or exceeds the trigger level.

Lyng also announced that the adjusted base quantity under the Meat Import Act of 1979 has been set at 1,307.1 million pounds. The adjusted base quantity is the level at which quotas could be set. By law, the trigger level under the act is set 10 percent above the adjusted base quantity.

USDA's import estimate includes fresh, chilled or frozen meat of cattle, sheep (except lamb), goats, and certain prepared and preserved beef and veal products.

The trigger level, adjusted base quantity and estimate of 1989 meat imports reflect Canada's inclusion under Meat Import Act requirements. If the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement takes effect, Canada's meat exports to the United States will no longer be included in making the estimate required by the Meat Import Act. USDA's next quarterly estimate of meat imports, scheduled to be announced before April 1, will exclude imports from Canada if the trade agreement has taken effect.

Actual Monthly Imports of Meat Subject to the Law

	1985	1986	1987	1988
	.... (millions of pounds)			
January	78.5	77.7	44.4	135.6
February	75.9	102.2	138.2	112.3
March	90.9	83.2	84.9	144.8
April	129.7	70.8	146.0	146.6
May	92.9	72.1	103.4	134.7
June	84.0	148.4	135.4	142.7
July	162.0	122.1	181.5	124.4
August	104.2	144.0	137.4	123.1
September	134.4	167.4	158.0	140.3
October	121.1	119.8	153.8	118.7
November	88.4	102.4	86.6	106.3
December	156.6	129.2	90.1	
Total*	1,318.2	1,339.3	1,459.7	

*Totals may not add due to rounding.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448

#

USDA RELEASES WHEAT FROM THE FOOD SECURITY WHEAT RESERVE FOR USE IN P.L. 480

WASHINGTON, Dec. 30—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Milton J. Hertz today announced procedures for using the Food Security Wheat Reserve for supplying Public Law 480 emergency programs.

On October 26, President Reagan authorized the release from the Food Security Wheat Reserve (FSWR) of up to 1.5 million metric tons of wheat for use in the Public Law 480 emergency programs. The wheat will be used in both Title I and Title II programs of P.L. 480. The authorization is for fiscal year 1989.

Purchase authorizations issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service will indicate which Title I programs will be supplied from the reserve.

Title I sales will be made in the normal manner between the importing country and the supplier except that the supplier will be required to acquire from the Commodity Credit Corporation, prior to export, a quantity of wheat from the FSWR catalog equal to the Title I contract quantity. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's Kansas City Commodity Office will be responsible for the FSWR catalog and for determining daily prices at which FSWR stocks can be obtained.

The wheat contained in the FSWR catalog will be available only to suppliers who are required to obtain wheat from the FSWR in accordance with their Title I sales contract. Suppliers will be able to acquire wheat from the FSWR catalog through cash purchases or use of CCC certificates. Offers for wheat contained in the FSWR catalog will be accepted on a first-come- first-served basis. Terms and conditions are contained in Announcement KC-FSWR-1, issued by the Kansas City Commodity Office.

FSWR wheat and wheat products will be handled differently under Title II than under Title I since commodities made available under Title II are either purchased by CCC or supplied directly from CCC-owned stocks. Wheat shipments for Title II will be made from CCC-designated FSWR stocks. Processed wheat products may continue to be purchased by CCC on the open market with grain equivalent quantities of FSWR stocks sold in the market-place.

For information on Title I Public Law 480 sales programs, contact the Public Law 480 Operations Division, FAS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1000. Telephone: (202) 447-5780.

Further information on the FSWR catalog and Announcement KC-FSWR-1 may be obtained from KCCO, Bulk Grain Merchandising Division, Kansas City, Mo. 64141-0205. Telephone: (816) 926-6420.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448.

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CCC LOAN INTEREST RATE FOR JANUARY 8-7/8 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3—Commodity loans disbursed in January by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry an 8-7/8 percent interest rate, according to Milton Hertz, CCC executive vice president.

The new rate, up from December's 8-1/4 percent, reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in January.

Any 1988 loans outstanding on Dec. 31, 1988, subsequent new loans, or outstanding facility loans approved and disbursed on or after April 1, 1981 and before Jan. 1, 1989, will accrue interest at a rate of 8-7/8 percent per year during 1989. This interest rate is subject to adjustment each Jan. 1.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

#

SCS REMINDS FARMERS OF DEADLINE FOR CONSERVATION PLANS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3—Wilson Scaling, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service, today reminded farmers that they have less than a year to get a conservation plan approved for their highly erodible acreage. Farmers must have such plans approved by the end of 1989 to remain eligible for USDA program benefits.

Scaling said that most farmers who still need a conservation plan will receive a written notice about the deadline from their local SCS office in the next few weeks.

About 65 percent of farmers participating in USDA crop programs already have obtained USDA approval for their conservation plans. SCS estimates that about 800,000 plans are needed nationwide.

"We know some farmers are holding off because they are afraid the rules for erosion reduction were too rigid," Scaling said. "That's a misconception. The final rule provides for flexibility in reaching acceptable erosion reductions based on local conditions and standards in field office technical guides."

Under provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, anyone who farms highly erodible land must develop a conservation plan for the land and have it approved by Dec. 31, 1989, by their local soil conservation district in order to remain eligible for USDA farm program benefits. Those benefits include price and income supports, crop insurance, Farmers Home Administration loans, Commodity Credit Corporation storage payments, farm storage facility loans, Conservation Reserve Program annual payments, and other programs under which USDA makes commodity-related payments.

Producers who do not get their plan approved in time will forfeit USDA program benefits on more than just their highly erodible acres. Loss of eligibility applies to all of the the land that a person farms, not just to erodible acreage.

"It's important that farmers act now to get a plan because those who have their plans are already asking for our assistance in implementing them," Scaling said. "This is going to be a tremendously busy year for our conservationists and we are trying to make sure that everyone who wants help gets it."

Kathy Gugulis (202) 447-9149

#

NO CHANGE IN DAIRY PRICE SUPPORT THROUGH MARCH 31

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3—The national support price for milk will remain at $10.60 per hundredweight (cwt.) from Jan. 1 through March 31, Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng announced today.

The support price is unchanged under provisions of the Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended by the Food Security Act of 1985 and the Disaster Assistance Act of 1988. These provisions require the secretary to increase the support price on Jan. 1 if he estimates net purchases by the Commodity Credit Corporation under the dairy price support program in calendar 1989 will be less than 2.5 billion pounds, milk equivalent.

"We estimate that net purchases under the price support program, including the temporary April 1 to June 30 50-cent increase in the support price provided for in the Disaster Assistance Act of 1988, will be 6.5 billion pounds," Lyng said.

The support price of $10.60 is for milk with a milkfat content of 3.67 percent—the national average—and compares with $10.33 per cwt. for milk with a milkfat content of 3.5 percent.

The price support program for milk is carried out through CCC purchases of butter, cheese and nonfat dry milk. The CCC purchase prices announced last Jan. 8 for these products also remain unchanged.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

— long grain whole kernels, 9.55 cents per pound;
— medium grain whole kernels, 8.80 cents per pound;
— short grain whole kernels, 8.74 cents per pound;
— broken kernels, 4.77 cents per pound.

Minimum loan repayment rates for 1987 crop loans are the higher of the world price or 50 percent of the loan rate. For 1988 crop rice, the minimum repayment rates are the higher of the world price or 60 percent of the loan rate.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

— long grain, $5.90 per hundredweight;
— medium grain, $5.51 per hundredweight;
— short grain, $5.27 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3:00 P.M. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Jan. 10 at 3:00 P.M. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-5954

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USDA AMENDS EGG RESEARCH AND PROMOTION ORDER

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that the Egg Research and Promotion Order, issued under the 1974 Egg Research and Consumer Information Act, was amended Jan. 1 to eliminate producer assessment refunds for 18 months.

J. Patrick Boyle, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said that after the 18 months, USDA will conduct a referendum among prodcers to determine whether they wish to continue the mandatory, non-refundable assessment program.

The order also was amended to require the American Egg Board, which administers the order, to place in escrow 10 percent of the assessments received during the 18 months to settle refund requests should the results of the referendum not favor continuing non-refundable assessments. Should the referendum favor continuing the non-refundable assessment program, the escrowed money would revert to the board.

Another amendment limits the expenses the board may incur to administer the order.

These amendments to the egg order reflect Oct. 31, 1988, congressional amendments to the Egg Research and Consumer Information Act, Boyle said.

The act authorizes funding for research, producer and consumer education, and promotion to maintain and develop markets for eggs, egg products, and laying hens no longer suitable for egg production.

The amendments will appear as an interim final rule in the Jan. 4 Federal Register. Comments, postmarked by Feb. 3, should be sent to Janice L. Lockard, Chief, Standardization Branch, Poultry Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 3944-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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USDA REVISES COUNTRY, COMMODITY PUBLIC LAW 480 ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL 1989

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued revised country and commodity allocations for fiscal year 1989 under Titles I/III of Public Law 480, the Food for Peace Program.

Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard W. Goldberg said current program plans provide for distribution of $807 million in commodity shipments, within the overall program level of $851.9 million. Of the curren amount, $707 million is presently allocated and $100 million is being held in a reserve to furnish commodities for unforeseen needs during the remainder of the fiscal year.

Goldberg said there has been an increase in the allocations for Bangladesh, Indonesia, Morocco, Peru, Yemen and Zaire; the allocation for Madagascar has been withdrawn. Also, wood is included in the commodity allocations for the first time to help meet exceptional critical reconstruction needs in Jamaica resulting from recent massive hurricane damage. In addition, some minor revisions have been made to the commodity composition of the table.

The revised allocations meet the legal requirement of Section III of P.L. 480, which directs that not less than 75 percent of the food commodities be allocated to friendly countries that meet the per capita income criterion for lending by the International Development Association. Currently the countries in this category are those with an annual per capita gross national product of $940 or less.

Goldberg said the program takes into account many variables including commodity and budget availabilities; changing economic and foreign policy situations, including human rights assessments; potential for market development; fluctuations in commodity prices; availability of handling, storage and distribution facilities; and possible disincentives to local production.

Except for agreements already signed, these allocations do not represent final U.S. commitments or agreements with participating governments. Situations still may develop which could cause a further change in country and commodity allocations, Goldberg said.

Title I of P.L. 480 is a concessional sales program designed to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster economic development in recipient countries. The program provides export credit of up to 40 years, with a grace period of up to 10 years and low interest rates.

Title III provides for the forgiveness of the debt incurred under Title I, based on accomplishments in food for development programs and projects agreed upon by the United States and recipient countries.

Additional technical information on the P.L. 480 program is available from Mary Chambliss of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, (202) 447-3573.

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HOMEOWNERS SHOULD ACT SOON TO PROTECT TREES FROM WINTER SUN

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5—Winter sun damage to shade and fruit trees, a perennial problem for homeowners in the upper Midwest and Northeast, can still be prevented in the coming weeks, said a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

"It's possible that some damage may have already occurred from what we call sun scald," said Mark P. Widrlechner, a horticulturist with the Agricultural Research Service. "But if you act fairly soon, chances are very good that you can protect your trees."

Sun scald is caused by a rapid fluctuation of temperatures in winter, he said. The sun warms up tree bark above freezing, allowing water to flow freely up and down inside the trunk and branches. When temperatures drop at night, the water freezes, cracking the bark and injuring the tree.

"If you've ever seen Midwestern apple orchards, you'll remember that many of the tree trunks are painted white," Widrlechner said. "That's to reflect heat away from the bark. Homeowners, though, can simply wrap their tree trunks with a paper wrap available at garden or hardware stores."

He recommends wrapping shade and fruit trees up to four feet above the soil, as soon as possible.

Damage from sun scald is mostly on the south side of deciduous trees located in predominantly sunny areas, and generally is confined to the trunk, says Widrlechner of the agency's North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station, Ames, Iowa.

Low temperature danger zones differ for each type of tree, but fruit trees are the most susceptible to subfreezing temperatures. Newly planted, thinbarked trees such as maples and ash are also at high risk.

"If the scald is really bad, it will kill the tree, particularly if a young tree is affected," he said. "Otherwise, it can wreck the bark and begin a harmful cycle leading to disease that eventually can weaken trees."

In some cases, the dead bark falls away the following spring, exposing the underlying trunk to insects and decay.

Widrlechner said fluctuating temperatures can cause a different sort of problem on yew and hemlock trees, both conifers common in the Midwest.

"The sun heats up those dark-colored needles, water flows and later freezes, and pretty soon you have a winter burn," he said. "The needles dry out and then fall off in the spring."

Widrlechner said that wrapping or painting the trunk will not protect a conifer. "About the only thing you can do, the next time you want to plant an evergreen, is choose a tree more resistant to winter burn, like juniper. Or plant in protected areas away from direct sun."

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